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It was announced in the November 4 issue of *Science* magazine (*Science* 266, 723, 1994) that Hoffmann-La Roche will close the Roche Institute of Molecular Biology (RIMB) in Nutley, New Jersey. Although the Institute will be relocated on the campus of Syntex in Palo Alto, California, it is apparent that the RIMB will continue to exist in name only since the mission of the transplanted Institute will focus on genomics and the sequencing of the human genome, efforts that are now in vogue. Since it appears to be unlikely that any members of the 160-person staff will be asked to move to the new location, the current staff must relocate, retire or find new positions.

We, the undersigned, view these events with great sadness, most importantly because they occur at a time when support for such research is dwindling at the expense of what is frequently trendy, goal-oriented research. The RIMB has been unique since its inception in 1967 when it became the first institution devoted entirely to basic research supported by a pharmaceutical company. Initially, there was considerable skepticism in the scientific community regarding Hoffmann-La Roche's commitment. However, with Roche's generous support the Institute attracted a number of excellent scientists and soon attained a world-class reputation which has been maintained for over 25 years. Based on most recent citation indexes, for instance, the RIMB ranks extremely high. In addition, the Institute has played a very important role in training outstanding scientists, many of whom now occupy leadership positions in academia and industry. With the help of the Institute, Hoffmann-La Roche, Inc. became one of the first pharmaceutical companies to utilize molecular biology in drug development, thereby making it a standard-bearer in the industry. Moreover, the development and marketing of Abuscreen and alpha interferon stemmed directly from the research of Institute scientists. The RIMB is unique and has succeeded in its mission in research and training to an extent that exceeded expectations. Since our understanding of the molecular biology of cellular processes is far from exhausted, it is difficult to understand Hoffmann-La Roche's decision to close the RIMB in Nutley.

For the current members of the RIMB, this closure represents a personal loss and a feeling of abandonment by Hoffmann-La Roche to which they committed themselves and their careers. For the larger scientific community, it represents yet another loss in support for the kind of fundamental research that is essential for scientific progress but for which there is no vocal public constituency.